

# MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

## Success Stories from the Field

### Preco, Inc.

Idaho TechHelp

### Preco Backs Up To Success

#### Client Profile:

Preco Electronics Inc. was established in 1947 as a re-builder of automotive water pumps, batteries, starters and generators. In 1967 Preco pioneered the invention of the electronic reversing alarm, which has been recognized and accepted in the commercial heavy equipment industry for over 30 years. Today, Preco's strong heritage brings a unique blend of high quality engineering and manufacturing of rugged products for work-site safety and leading edge technology solutions that solve business issues in the heavy equipment industries. The company employs 200 people at its facility in Boise, Idaho.

#### Situation:

In the past, Preco participated in several Lean 101 workshops presented by Idaho TechHelp, a NIST MEP network affiliate. Recent changes at Preco have focused the company on a few core products with a reduced staff. Recently, the company relocated a key manufacturing line to a new location in its manufacturing facility, and once again Preco requested help from TechHelp in setting up the line using Lean principles. To remain competitive, Preco puts a lot of focus on new product development (NPD). The company augments its own NPD capabilities by making use of the TechHelp NPD staff and NPD Lab at Boise State University. For many years, Preco has worked with TechHelp to develop and build prototypes to assist product development.

#### Solution:

TechHelp provided an on-site Lean assessment, team development, Value Stream Mapping and Kaizen events to improve preproduction and production productivity. TechHelp provided training in Lean principles, 5S (Sort, Set in Order, Shine, Standardize, Sustain) Visual Workplace and Cellular Flow. TechHelp worked with the Preco team to design a new Cell that would facilitate one piece flow and minimize waste. Preco implemented cell layout and workstation design. TechHelp's assistance has helped Preco improve time to market, create high quality SLA (stereolithography) prototypes for product testing and proof of concept with customers, and reduce lead time while increasing collaboration and visibility within their supply chain.

#### Results:

- \* Avoided \$50,000 investment in new product development.
- \* Reduced inventory levels by more than 30 percent.
- \* Reduced lead times.

#### Testimonial:

"We have thoroughly enjoyed working with TechHelp Specialist Steve Hatten and the TechHelp team. Steve's extensive knowledge and experience along with his ability to analyze processes and suggest improvement has helped us improve productivity and reduce operating costs."

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John Allison, Director of Supply Base Management